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ABSTRACT

The recommendations contained in this report represent the positions of the New Mexico Association of Community, Junior and Technical Colleges concerning important issues facing the state's two-year institutions. In each of 12 areas, a discussion of key issues is followed by a series of recommendations. These areas are: (1) the continuation of low tuition charges; (2) the potential role of community colleges in economic development; (3) local autonomy in program approval; (4) licensure of vocational instructors; (5) developmental education; (6) the development of a welfare reform program linked to education; (7) recognition of the associate degree in nursing as the minimum educational requirement for licensure examination and entry into practice; (8) cooperative education programs; (9) two-year college involvement with the Job Training Partnership Act; (10) state legislation giving counties a 2% share of the revenues generated from property taxes; (11) state-level promotion of two-year institutions to the public; (12) the inclusion of two-year colleges in any statewide plan for the initiation of "prestige professorships." (EJV)

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**The New Mexico Association**
**of Community, Junior and Technical Colleges**

# Position Paper on Important Issues Facing New Mexico's Two-Year Colleges

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October, 1987

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October 22, 1987

The Honorable Garrey Carruthers
Governor of New Mexico
State Capitol
Santa Fe, NM 87503

Dear Governor Carruthers:

The New Mexico Association of Community, Junior and Technical Colleges has adopted a series of recommendations pertaining to important issues facing New Mexico's two-year community, branch and technical colleges. These recommendations are outlined in this formal position paper which we are pleased to submit to you for your consideration. The issues and recommendations addressed in this report are presented in response to the discussions we had at our meeting on September 1.

We appreciate the opportunity to be involved in discussions about higher education in New Mexico as you examine ways to improve the state's higher education system so that more New Mexican's can benefit from its resources and receive quality educational services. We share in your objective and look forward to continued cooperation.

Sincerely,

William C. Witter, President
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Junior and Technical Colleges

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**TUITION**

**Discussion:**

Recent studies by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, the American Council on Education, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and others reveal that college consumer costs in the 1980s, especially tuition, are rising much more rapidly than the prices for other goods and services. Tuition at both public and independent colleges is rising at twice the rate of inflation and several percentage points faster than personal income. Since 1970, the median family income has increased by about 187 percent, while college tuition has increased nearly 235 percent. This reveals that a family's ability to afford higher education has declined substantially.

Further research by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities reveals the following facts:

- The percentage of high school graduates going to college is generally lower in states with high tuition.
- The percentage of veterans receiving benefits under the G.I. Bill who to to any college has generally been low in states with high tuition.
- A great many students at public colleges have parents who can provide little or no assistance. The students earn a substantial part of their college expenses and are very dependent on low tuition.
- Most Americans, including the great majority of minority and working-class students, are dependent on low-tuition public colleges for an education.

The traditional argument presented by economists that "a policy for higher tuition coupled with the availability of higher levels of financial aid provides more equity" is not convincing. Efficiency in higher education comes from sound management practices and not from burdening students with escalating costs which reduce their opportunity for access.

It is fundamental to the mission of New Mexico's two-year institutions that there is ease of access. Therefore, it is essential that costs for students, including tuition, remain affordable.

**Recommendations:**

1. Tuition rates are better determined by local boards, regents and trustees.
2. Most of New Mexico's two-year colleges provide local operational support and local capital outlay support through college district tax levies. This local tax support combined with tuition means that community colleges are shouldering a high level of the total cost of educating students. Local tax support should be considered in determining levels of tuition.

3. It should be recognized that higher tuition costs tend to reduce the participation rates of New Mexico high school graduates.

4. It should be recognized that inflation erodes a family's ability to pay for college costs. Therefore, tuition should not be increased at a rate higher than the annual inflation factor.

5. Student financial aid alone is not and cannot be a substitute for low tuition -- it is only a valuable supplement.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Discussion:**

North Carolina has enjoyed particular success in using its system of community colleges to aid in the economic development of the state. The North Carolina model provides some insight into what should occur in New Mexico.

North Carolina's community college system was founded in 1963 to provide adults with technical/vocational training, college parallel and adult basic education courses. The system was established at about the same time as the initial development of the North Carolina Research Triangle Park, created as a means to attract new high-tech industries to the state and to help broaden its economic base. The park is now internationally famous for its scientific research and development facilities. One of the main reasons for its success is the state's higher education system, including its community colleges.

The North Carolina model is based on the assumption that community colleges must play a critical role in economic development. This is demonstrated in several ways:

- It is understood that successful economic development depends on the cooperative planning of three groups -- business, government and education.

- North Carolina's community colleges work closely with the Department of Commerce in recruiting new industries. A community college representative serves on the recruiting team to provide expertise in designing customized training programs for new industries.

- Business and industry, in turn, have a major impact on influencing the legislature to support funding for training.

North Carolina's community college system includes 58 institutions covering all 100 counties. From its inception, the system has had a strong commitment to and a strong cooperative relationship with business and industry. Examples of this commitment include:

- Of the 20 members serving on the state Board of Community Colleges, 13 are from the business community. Nine are either CEOs, presidents or senior vice presidents of their companies.

- At the local institutional level, each program of study has a business/industry advisory committee which advises the college staff of the changing needs of the particular business or industry involved.

- Business and industry invest in the community colleges by providing statewide and local scholarship money, donating equipment and loaning personnel with specialized skills to educational institutions to help teach.

The North Carolina community college system provides a variety of programs to help promote economic development in the state. Programs include:

- The Industries Services Division within the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges provides training services to prospective employees of a new or expanding industry as an incentive for an industry to locate or expand operations in the state. The Industries Services Division and the local community college work with the employer to design a customized training program.

  The Industry Services staff and participating community colleges have provided training to more than 150,000 production workers in approximately 1,500 companies. The North Carolina Legislature appropriates approximately $6 million annually to fund the program.

- The Cooperative Skills Training Program is designed to respond to the training needs of existing industries. Often, training programs are developed in response to new technologies or demands in the workplace. This training is of particular importance to industries that need specific training for a small group of employees.

  In 1985-86, cooperative skills training was provided to 4,777 employees in 498 industries. This year, the North Carolina Legislature appropriated $1.5 million to provide coordinators and instruction in 15 institutions in the community college system.

- Federal training programs operated under the provisions of the Job Training Partnership Act are charged with training the disadvantaged, including youth and workers who have lost their jobs due to displacement. The programs are primarily administered by groups of private sector business people, educators and others who have been selected to serve on local Private Industry Councils. The Private Industry Council members have been encouraged to utilize community colleges to provide training for JTPA clients because of their easy access, their experience in training the underprepared and their established linkages with the business community.

  The Department of Community Colleges' JTPA Technical Assistance Unit coordinates JTPA activities at the state level and works with the local institutions to help them develop, implement and administer programs.

- Small business centers have been established at 40 institutions in the North Carolina community college system to form a small business assistance network. The network centers provide small business owners and managers with professional information and advice, education and training, and counseling and referral services.

  Each of the 40 institutions with small business centers currently receive $50,000 per year in state funding to help operate the centers. The plan is to establish centers on all 58 community college campuses in North Carolina by 1990.

- Over the past two years, nine small group conferences have been held for educators, state officials and business and industry leaders to discuss the needs and directions of business and industry in the coming years. Each conference is limited to 20 participants and focuses on a specific industry, such as chemicals or textiles.

  The plan is to hold conferences every two years to continue the dialog among these groups.

**Recommendations:**

1. Business, government and educational institutions (including two-year colleges) should be involved in the development and implementation of a state economic development plan. A small-group forum of educators, state officials and business and industry leaders should be created to discuss the needs and future directions of specific businesses and industries in the state.

2. New Mexico's educational resources, especially the two-year colleges and the services they are able to provide, should be used to attract new business and industry to the state and to assist existing business and industry.

3. It should be recognized that New Mexico's two-year colleges must play a critical role in economic development. This is appropriate in light of their mission to serve the educational and training needs of their communities.

4. Representatives from two-year colleges should be included on the teams that recruit new business and industry to the state to provide expertise in the development of customized training programs.

5. State funding should be appropriated to expand the New Mexico Business Assistance Network so that small business centers can be established at all of the state's two-year community, branch and technical colleges.

6. Existing programs within the state such as the Industrial Development Training Program, the New Mexico Business Assistance Network and JTPA should be presented as a package and used to attract new business and industry to the state.

**PROGRAM APPROVAL**

**Discussion:**

Basic to the mission and philosophy of New Mexico's two-year institutions is the desire to remain responsive to the needs of their local communities. Local autonomy is critical so that the two-year colleges can initiate new programs to meet the training needs of existing and new business and industry groups. Likewise, local autonomy serves to allow the two-year institutions to phase out educational programs that are no longer needed. The demands of today's job market are constantly changing as new technologies come on line and others become obsolete. New Mexico's two-year colleges must remain flexible to adapt quickly to these changing needs.

There has been some discussion about moving toward state approval of educational programs at the state's two-year colleges. The Association believes that this would greatly diminish the ability of two-year colleges to respond quickly to local educational needs.

**Recommendations:**

1. Program approval should remain at the local level and should continue to be the responsibility of local governing boards. State approval should not be considered as a viable option.

**LICENSURE**

**Discussion:**

The New Mexico Department of Education currently requires licensure of vocational instructors who teach in programs that are supported by state Department of Education funds. This requirement to license only vocational education instructors is unfair and creates an unnecessary division between academic and vocational faculty. It discriminates against one instructional group. The Education Commission of the States estimates that about 20 states in the nation are addressing the licensure/certification issue because it is apparently causing tension between vocational and academic faculty.

The Association believes that all instructional personnel -- whether academic or vocational -- should be encouraged to seek professional development opportunities. The Association endorses the concept of a professional development plan for all instructors.

**Recommendations:**

1. Legislation should be drafted to eliminate the licensure requirement for vocational instructors at the postsecondary level.

2. All postsecondary institutions should be held accountable for providing quality instruction and should develop professional development plans for faculty. Guidelines established by the North

Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the accrediting agency for colleges in New Mexico, should be used in designing professional development plans.

3. All instructional faculty should be required to take part in the professional development plans of their individual institutions.

**DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION**

**Discussion:**

Developmental education is an essential element of higher education. It is critical for encouraging more New Mexicans to seek an education that prepares them to enter the work force and become productive citizens of the state. On the one hand, developmental education can be described as a "rescue" operation, representing a final opportunity for such groups as immigrants, high school dropouts and underprepared high school graduates to move into higher education. At the same time, developmental education is important for individuals who may be returning to school after a long break and who need to brush up in certain basic skills before moving into college-level classes.

Some of the four-year institutions in New Mexico are increasing their admissions standards and are moving toward eliminating most of their developmental programs.

In contrast, developmental education remains an integral part of the mission and philosophy of New Mexico's two-year colleges. The two-year colleges all subscribe to an open admissions policy that is designed to provide easy access to higher education, regardless of an individual's educational background. Two-year institutions are well-known for serving non-traditional students, especially those who might not otherwise pursue higher education. The two-year colleges already have successful developmental education programs in place that are serving underprepared students. New Mexico's two-year colleges, with their long-standing commitment to provide open access to higher education, stand ready to take on an even greater role in providing developmental education to the citizens of the state.

**Recommendations:**

1. Developmental education must continue to be recognized as a vital resource that encourages New Mexico's citizens, especially those who are not prepared for college, to enter the higher education system and to receive training that enables them to become productive workers and citizens.

2. New Mexico's two-year colleges should be recognized as willing and able to take on a greater role in developmental education.

3. Developmental education programs should be well-funded so that the responsibilities associated with operating these programs can be carried out successfully.

**WELFARE REFORM**

**Discussion:**

New Mexico Governor Garrey Carruthers has discussed the possibility of developing a welfare reform program that would be linked to education. According to preliminary discussions, an important element of his plan would require welfare recipients to enroll in educational programs as part of being eligible to receive aid.

New Mexico's two-year colleges are strategically located throughout the state. All of them subscribe to an open admissions policy designed to guarantee easy access to higher education, regardless of an individual's educational background. The two-year institutions have successful developmental education programs in place as well as a wide variety of skills training programs. All of these elements indicate that the two-year college's are well-equipped and prepared to assume a role in welfare reform if the governor's proposed plan is implemented.

**Recommendations:**

1. State agencies and educational institutions should work cooperatively to develop a well-defined plan for implementing any proposal linking education with welfare reform.

2. New Mexico's two-year college system, with educational programs and support services already in place, can and should be utilized in welfare reform proposals that might be considered by the state Legislature.

3. The New Mexico Association of Community, Junior and Technical Colleges will cooperate with the governor in developing a plan and locating funding sources to implement his proposed welfare reform package.

**NURSING**

**Discussion:**

Two national nursing organizations -- the American Nursing Association and the National League for Nursing -- are taking positions to designate the bachelor's degree in nursing as the minimum acceptable degree for entry into registered nursing. The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges has adopted a resolution opposing this move. The New Mexico Association of Community, Junior and Technical Colleges has joined the national association in its opposition.

Currently, students who graduate with an associate degree in nursing are eligible to take the licensing exam to become a registered nurse. Over the past 35 years, more than 350,000 nursing students have graduated from associate degree programs at community, technical and junior colleges across the nation.

It is the belief of the New Mexico Association of Community, Junior and Technical Colleges that the state's associate degree nursing graduates are making significant contributions to the health care delivery system of the state. The current requirements for licensure are meeting the needs of the state and are ensuring that the state has an adequate, skilled and competent corps of registered nurses. Nationally and in New Mexico, graduates of associate degree nursing programs are doing well on licensing exams. There is no evidence that they are unqualified to be registered nurses.

**Recommendations:**

1. The associate degree in nursing should continue to be recognized as the minimum educational requirement for licensure examination and for entry into nursing practice as a registered nurse.

2. Associate degree graduates who pass the licensure examination should be designated as a "registered nurse" without any limitation as to the scope of nursing practice based upon prior educational preparation.

3. A system of evaluation, independent of any governmental or state licensing authority, should be established to grant certification or appropriate recognition to nurses who attain competencies beyond the entry level by obtaining baccalaureate degrees or advanced degrees in nursing.

4. The one-year curriculum in practical nursing should continue to be recognized as the minimum educational requirement for licensure and designation as a "licensed practical nurse."

## COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**Discussion:**

Cooperative education programs provide valuable opportunities for students to combine their classroom experience with actual on-the-job training. These programs are especially valuable in vocational programs where hands-on, practical experience is beneficial to students. Different combinations of work and school may be arranged. Students may work for eight weeks and attend school for eight weeks, for example, or they may attend school in the morning and work in the afternoon. In any case, the students are given a chance to experience actual work settings which they hope to enter upon graduation from college. In many cases, the co-op programs serve as an excellent means for job placement, allowing students to find jobs and employers to find well-trained employees.

Cooperative education programs are expensive to manage and to operate. Managed properly, cooperative education programs usually require a full-time director. This, in turn, requires a large number of participants to justify the expense involved in hiring a full-time director. While New Mexico's two-year colleges are taking advantage of cooperative education programs, the time and expense involved often means that such programs can't be widely used.

**Recommendations:**

1. New Mexico's two-year colleges should be encouraged to utilize cooperative education programs and to take advantage of the valuable learning opportunities they provide to students. However, it is not recommended that the two-year colleges increase their use of cooperative education programs because of the expense involved in managing and operating these programs.

## THE JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT (JTPA)

**Discussion:**

The Job Training Partnership Act is a federally funded program designed to provide classroom and on-the-job training to low-income and unemployed individuals so that they may successfully enter the work force. For the 1987-88 fiscal year, New Mexico is expected to receive approximately $26 million in JTPA funds. The JTPA funds are targeted at vocational training programs of two years or less. In general, 60 percent of the funds go toward on-the-job training programs and 40 percent of the funds go toward classroom training.

**Recommendations:**

1. JTPA funds are an excellent resource that should be incorporated into an economic development plan for New Mexico.

2. New Mexico's two-year colleges are best suited to utilize the JTPA funds because of their ability to provide classroom training, arrange for on-the-job training programs and create custom-designed training programs to meet individual needs.

3. A larger share of JTPA funds should go toward classroom training. This better ensures that individuals gain valuable skills which will last a lifetime and which will aid them in entering the work force and remaining productive workers and citizens.

## TWO PERCENT OVERHEAD CHARGE

**Discussion:**

The general tax package (HB6) passed by the 1986 session of the New Mexico Legislature contained language which gives counties a 2 percent share of the revenues generated from property taxes to offset collection costs. This applies to the local property taxes collected to support the operation and capital outlay projects of most of the state's two-year colleges.

During 1986-87, New Mexico counties received a cumulative total of approximately $502,000 in overhead charges for collecting property taxes for the state's two-year colleges. This represents a significant decrease in the level of appropriations to the two-year colleges and has a negative impact on their operating and capital outlay budgets.

The Association believes that most of the taxpayers in their districts are unaware of this practice and would object to it if they were informed of it.

**Recommendations:**

1. Legislation should be drafted and introduced in the next session of the Legislature to eliminate or repeal the 2 percent overhead charge to counties or to exempt the two-year postsecondary educational institutions from paying the overhead charge.

## PUBLIC PROMOTION

**Discussion:**

Two-year institutions throughout New Mexico are generally well-known within their local communities. Local citizens in increasing numbers are taking advantage of their educational services. However, at the statewide level there is a general lack of understanding about how two-year schools fit into the overall system of higher education in New Mexico. Two-year schools have often been referred to as New Mexico's "best kept secret."

**Recommendations:**

1. Collectively, the two-year colleges should conduct a statewide television campaign promoting their programs and services. Governor Garrey Carruthers should be asked to appear in the television spots to endorse the two-year college system. Costs associated with the campaign will be spread among the two-year colleges.

2. The Association should develop an informational "pocket guide" which can be used to inform legislators, business and community leaders and others throughout the state about the educational programs and services offered by New Mexico's two-year colleges.

## PRESTIGE PROFESSORSHIPS

**Discussion:**

Two-year colleges usually don't have appropriate resources to attract visiting professors. The concept of prestige professorships, however, is excellent and would provide a valuable means for enhancing the learning environment. New Mexico's two-year colleges would benefit from such a proposal and would like to be involved.

**Recommendations:**

1. New Mexico's two-year colleges should be included in any statewide plan that might be developed for initiating prestige professorships in the state's postsecondary educational institutions.

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